

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 NSC-05 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-10
L-03 ACDA-12 NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 SP-02 ICA-11
TRSE-00 DODE-00 /090 W
-----102165 241656Z /64

R 271038Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8848
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
USNMR SHAPE
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 09513

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW, UR
SUBJECT: KOHL ON BREZHNEV AND ON FRG DOMESTIC SITUATION

1. GERMAN OPPOSITION LEADER HELMUT KOHL/MAY 23 TOLD ME
THE FOLLOWING ABOUT HIS IMPRESSION OF THE BREZHNEV VISIT
AND ABOUT HIS EXPECTATIONS REGARDING THE GERMAN DOMESTIC
POLITICAL SCENE.

THE BREZHNEV VISIT

2. KOHL SAID THAT HE HAD COME AWAY FROM HIS CONVERSATION
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WITH BREZHNEV VERY DISCOURAGED ABOUT BERLIN. HE SAID
BREZHNEV HAD TAKEN VERY TRADITIONAL POSITIONS WHICH
SHOWED NO TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY. MOREOVER, BREZHNEV HAD
ACCUSED THE CDU AND OTHER FRG GROUPS OF ENGAGING IN
PROVOCATIONS.

3. KOHL SAID THAT THE ONLY TIME BREZHNEV HAD DEPARTED

FROM ESTABLISHED POSITIONS WAS DURING BRIEF PERSONAL EXCHANGES. ASIDE FROM THAT, HE EITHER READ HIS STATEMENTS OR MIGHT AS WELL HAVE READ THEM. HOWEVER, KOHL OBSERVED, THERE IS NO DOUBT IN HIS MIND THAT BREZHNEV CAN REMAIN IN POWER FOR QUITE A FEW YEARS DESPITE HIS PRESENT CONDITION (UNLESS, OF COURSE, HIS CONDITION DETERIORATES MARKEDLY). KOHL SAID IT SEEMED CLEAR TO HIM THAT EVERYBODY AROUND BREZHNEV BENEFITED FROM THE PRESENT SITUATION AND WAS CONCERNED THAT THEY MIGHT NOT DO AS WELL IF THAT SITUATION WERE TO CHANGE.

4. KOHL SAID HE HAD SOMEH LONG EXCHANGES AT DINNER WITH ALEXANDROV, A MEMBER OF BREZHNEV'S PARTY. THOUGH HE FOUND THOSE EXCHANGES VERY STIMULATING, THEY ALSO LEFT HIM DISCOURAGED ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR A GENUINE EASING OF TENSIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION. IN PASSING, HE REMARKED THAT HE WAS SOMEWHAT SHOCKED AT THE ALMOST EXCESSIVE CLOSENESS BETWEEN SPD LEADER BAHR AND ALEXANDROV DURING A CONVERSATION THAT HE OBSERVED BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM. IT IS CLEAR THAT KOHL, WHO HAS OUTGOING PERSONALITY, SEEMS QUITE RESERVED ABOUT INTIMACY WITH COMMUNIST OFFICIALS.

5. KOHL SAID IT STRUCK HIM THAT A NUMBER OF REMARKS MADE BY THE SOVIETS REVEALED THEIR EXPECTATION THAT THEY MIGHT SOON BE DEALING WITH THE CDU AS THE GOVERNING PARTY OF
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THE FRG. HE SAID THE RUSSIAN REMARKS -- PROBABLY ALEXANDROV'S -- INDICATED THAT MOSCOW WAS QUITE READY TO ACCEPT SUCH A CHANGE. THE SOVIETS SUGGESTED THAT THEY EXPECTED TO HAVE BETTER ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE FRG UNDER A CDU GOVERNMENT BUT THEY DID EXPECT GREATER

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 09513

TENSION IN SUCH A CASE BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE GDR.
KOHL OBSERVED THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT NOT BE TOO UNHAPPY
AT THE LATTER DEVELOPMENT.

6. KOHL SAID HE TOLD THE RUSSIANS THAT HE WAS PLANNING
TO ENGAGE IN ANOTHER PROVOCATION THIS SUMMER WHEN HE
PLANNED TO VISIT THE GDR WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN.

GERMAN DOMESTIC POLITICS

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7. KOHL TALKED IN GENERALLY RELAXED TERMS ABOUT THE
PROSPECTS FOR THIS YEAR'S STATE ELECTIONS IN THE FRG.
HE SAID THAT HE AND HIS PARTY COLLEAGUES HAD BEEN CAM-
PAIGNING HARD IN HAMBURG (WHERE HE KNEW THEY HAD NO
CHANCE OF WINNING) AND IN LOWER SAXONY. HE SAID THAT
HE WAS PLEASED ABOUT THE CROWDS THAT HE AND OTHERS WERE
DRAWING, BUT HE WAS NOT SURE WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN IN
TERMS OF VOTES.

8. KOHL SAID HE THOUGHT THE NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PARTIES
WOULD PROBABLY HELP THE CDU BECAUSE THEY WOULD TAKE MORE
VOTES FROM THE SPD AND FDP THAN FROM THE CDU. HE
EXPRESSED CURIOSITY AT WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS THE FDP'S
LACK OF A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN AND HE OBSERVED THAT THE

FDP MIGHT GO BELOW THE 5 PERCENT MARK IN LOWER SAXONY.

9. AS FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF A FOURTH (CSU) PARTY, HE SAID THAT HE WOULD SIMPLY ASK THE CSU IF IT WOULD ADHERE TO THE AGREEMENT OF LATE 1976 FOR COORDINATION OF STRATEGY. CREATION OF A FOURTH PARTY WOULD OBVIOUSLY VIOLATE THAT AGREEMENT. KOHL SAID HE EXPECTED TO MOVE THIS ISSUE TO SOME KIND OF A DECISION WITHIN A FEW WEEKS.

10. COMMENT: WE ARE INCLINED TO TAKE KOHL'S COMMENT TO THE EFFECT THAT THE USSR SEES THE OPPOSITION'S STAR RISING IN THE FRG WITH A GRAIN OF SALT, ALTHOUGH IT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE GENERAL IMPRESSION OF UNUSUAL SOVIET INTEREST IN THE OPPOSITION DURING BREZHNEV'S TRIP.
END COMMENT
STOESSEL

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